

Downtown SUMMIT

Break-out Session: Central Library

Summit Comment

1. New Central Library
 - a. Sentiment was strongly in favor of building a new central library.
 - b. People wanted to know what could be done to get it back on track.
 - c. The public needs to be better informed about why a new library is necessary and desirable. It was felt that a groundswell of support at a grassroots level can help push the new central library back on the agenda.
 - d. A strong central library is more cost effective than spreading out administrative duties throughout the branches, which would be prohibitive.
 - e. The perception of the new central library being linked to the wheel tax persists and needs to be addressed.
2. What are the problems with the current facility?
 - a. Insufficient space. Lawson McGhee was built as a municipal library in the early 70s and has since taken on the role of central library to the entire county system. Advances in technology have further consumed available space.
 - b. No Quiet Study areas
 - c. 20,000 volumes of books in storage
 - d. The Library has done too good a job of "bandaiding" problems. Public isn't aware of the extent of the space shortages because it's still pleasant and well run
3. Branches and the Central Library
 - a. Too many branches in the system burden the administrative functions and budget.
 - b. We're spoiled by the amount and quality of the branch system
 - c. The branches rely on the Central Library and couldn't exist without the administrative functions provided by the Central Library.
 - d. Branches are convenient but expensive.
4. Ideally, what features, programs and services would a new central library have?
 - a. It would be a place just to be – the third place outside of home and work.
 - b. It would be a catalyst for a total downtown experience – one of the reasons that someone would make the trip downtown.
 - c. It would be a marketplace of ideas.
 - d. A symbol of civic pride.
 - e. An educational institution – the place where education and culture intersect.
 - f. It is a place of lifelong learning for people of all ages.
 - g. It would be a GREAT place for kids – fun and exciting with colorful décor and programs. Enchanting and inviting.
 - h. Fun and stimulating for adults, providing programs that draw people in.
 - i. The hub of learning technology for those who could be left behind.
 - j. It is the public school for life.
 - k. It would provide space for quiet study.
 - l. It would be architecturally distinctive.
 - m. It would be an anchor for downtown – a destination.
 - n. It would include adequate space for programs.
 - o. It would have a technology center that includes multimedia labs.